Chapter IV. Agriculture.

CROPS.

Cotton.

adulteration. The American Dhárwár has declined in staple and lost its silkiness but this he thinks is due not to more mixing but to deterioration in the American seed.

The following table for the thirty-five years ending 1882-83 gives the areas under the two varieties of cotton, American and local:

BELGAUM COTTON AREA, 1846-1882.[1]

YEAR.	American.	Local.	Total.	YEAR.	American.	Local.	Total.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.		Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1846-47 ...	2017	110,103	112,120	1866-67 ...	1865	130,810	132,675
1847-48 ...	2617	115,888	118,505	1867-68 ...	2825	122,191	125,016
1848-49 ...	4190	134,514	138,704	1868-69 ...	3098	120,677	123,775
1849-50 ...	3059	145,216	148,275	1869-70 ...	7588	205,672	213,260
1850-51 ...	2382	181,728	184,060	1870-71 ...	13,166	163,072	176,238
1851-52 ...	2212	158,372	160,584	1871-72 ...	7295	154,181	161,476
1852-53 ...	1950	168,427	170,377	1872-73 ...	7487	161,232	168,719
1853-54 ...	1386	192,284	193,670	1873-74 ...	7570	160,622	168,192
1854-55 ...	1911	167,317	169,228	1874-75 ...	2139	175,589	177,728
1855-56 ...	1728	124,185	125,913	1875-76 ...	5941	214,983	220,924
1856-57 ...	4461	183,091	187,552	1876-77 ...	59	70,281	70,340
1857-58 ...	1487	230,548	232,035	1877-78 ...	167	146,701	146,868
1858-59 ...	1558	214,787	246,345	1878-79 ...	984	177,374	178,358
1859-60 ...	1977	288,668	290,645	1879-80 ...	592	174,103	174,695
1860-61 ...	6514	243,823	250,337	1880-81 ...	21	192,106	192,127
1861-62 ...	6820	278,903	285,583	1881-82 ...	344	163,504	163,848
1864-65 ...	3731	145,928	149,659	1882-83 ...	929	230,090	231,019
1865-66 ...	3730	163,676	167,406				

Famines.

1396.

On account of its uncertain rainfall Eastern Belgaum is one of the parts of the Bombay Presidency which is most liable to suffer from failure of crops. The earliest recorded failure of rain is the great Durga Devi famine. It began in 1396 and is said to have prevailed over the whole of India south of the Narbada and to have lasted for nearly twelve years. This famine was caused by the total want of seasonable rain. Almost no revenue was recovered and a large proportion of the people died. There is no record that any measures were adopted to relieve the distress.[2] In 1419 no rain fell and there was a grievous famine throughout the Deccan and Karnátak. Multitudes of cattle died from want of water. Ahmad Sháh

1419.

Bahmani (1419-1431) increased the pay of his troops and opened public stores of grain for the use of the poor. In 1420, there was again a failure of rain and the country was much disturbed.[3] The

1472.

years 1472 and 1473 are described as seasons of exceptional distress. No rain fell and no crops were sown for two years. Many died and many left the country. In the third year when rain at last fell scarcely any one was left to till the land.[4] In consequence of continued drought and great swarms of locusts there was a gradual failure of crops which began from 1787-88 and continued to 1795-96 and caused great distress among all classes.

1790.

In 1790 the march of the Maráthás under Parashurám Bháu through Belgaum and Dhárwár to Maisur was accompanied by such

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[1] From 1846-47 to 1861-62 the figures include those of the three sub-divisions of Bágalkot, Bádámi, and Hungund in the present district of Bijápur. For 1862-63 and 1863-64 no figures are available. From 1864-65 to 1882-83 the figures are for the present district of Belgaum including alienated lands in Government villages and native state lands mixed with Government lands. In 1881-82 the cotton area in Government villages was 91,400 acres.

[2] Grant Duff's Maráthás, 26.

[3] Briggs' Ferishta, II. 405.

[4] Briggs' Ferishta, II. 494.

Famines.

devastation that on its return from Maisur the victorious army almost perished for want of food. In the following year 1791-92 the complete failure of the early rain caused awful misery. Hardly any records have been found regarding this famine. But tradition speaks of it as the severest famine ever known, extending more or less over the whole of the Bombay Presidency except Sind and to Madras and the Nizám's territory. In Belgaum the distress seems to have been heightened by the disturbed state of the country and by vast crowds of immigrants from more afflicted parts. Under these influences grain could hardly be bought. Some high-caste Hindus, unable to get grain, and rejecting animal food, poisoned themselves, while the poorer classes found a scanty living on roots, herbs, dead animals, and even corpses. The famine was so severe that it was calculated that fully half the inhabitants of many villages died; of those who survived many wandered and never returned. In 1791-92, in the town and district of Gokák, from starvation alone twenty-five thousand people are said to have perished.[1] A story remains that a woman in Gokák under the pangs of hunger ate her own children, and in punishment was dragged at the foot of a buffalo till she died. From the numbers of uncared-for dead this famine is still remembered as the *Dongi Bura* or the Skull Famine. The estate-holders or *jágirdárs* are said to have done what they could to relieve the distress, but the Peshwa's government seems to have given no aid.[2] Plentiful rain fell in October 1791 and did much to relieve the distress.[3] In 1791 from the 7th to the 15th of May the rupee price of rice was six pounds (3 *shers*) at Dudhvad, Murgod, Bendvád, Ráybág, and Kudsi, eight pounds (4 *shers*) at Gokák, and ten pounds (5 *shers*) at Athni. The rupee price of gram was six pounds (3 *shers*) at Dudhvad and Murgod, eight pounds (4 *shers*) at Ráybág and Kudsi, and ten pounds (5 *shers*) at Athni. The rupee price of Indian millet was eight pounds (4 *shers*) at Dudhvad, Murgod, Ráybág, Kudsi, Gokák, and Bendvád; and twelve pounds (6 *shers*) at Athni.[4] In 1802-3 Belgaum again suffered severely from famine. This famine was less due to want of rain than to the depredations of Pendhári and other robbers, which, over large tracts, were so constant as to put a stop to tillage. The local distress was heightened by the arrival of crowds of people from the Godávari districts which the ravages of Holkar's army had turned into a desert. In the Gokák sub-division 15,000 people are said to have died of famine. The Peshwa's government seems to have made no attempt to relieve the distress.[5]

1790.

1802.

In 1832-33 almost no rain fell and almost no crops were reaped in the east of the district. The distress, though very severe, hardly amounted to famine. Many cattle died and some people are said to have sold their children for food. In 1853 the drought in the

1832-33.

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[1] Walton's Cotton, 65.
[2] Walton's Cotton, 6.
[3] Colonel Etheridge's Report on Past Famines, 103.
[4] Moore's Narrative of Captain Little's Detachment, 232.
[5] Colonel Etheridge's Report on Past Famines, 103.

Chapter IV. Agriculture. Famines. *1876:*

east of the district caused distress which was heightened by crowds of the destitute from Sholápur, where the failure of rain was more complete. Government granted considerable remissions.[1]

In 1876 a scanty and ill-timed rainfall of 21·34 led to failure of crops and distress amounting to famine over nearly half of the district.[2] The early crops failed almost entirely in Athni and Gokák, and over the greater part of Chikodi and Parasgad; in the three remaining sub-divisions they were less than half the average. In addition to the failure of the early rains, September and October passed with only a few showers, and, except on river banks, little or no cold-weather crops were sown. With high grain prices, Indian millet at fourteen instead of forty-three pounds the rupee, and no demand for field labour, large numbers of the poorer classes fell into distress. The need for Government help began about the middle of September, when relief works from local funds were started. Early in November there was scarcity of grain and increasing distress. Soon after large supplies began to pour in and the pressure lightened. In the hot months, with rising prices, distress returned, and the scanty fall of rain in July and August caused much anxiety and suffering. The timely and plentiful rainfall of the next two months saved the growing crops, and the condition of the people gradually improved. At the close of November the demand for Government help ceased.

The following details show, month by month, the phases through which the distress passed and the measures taken to meet it. In September 1876 rain held off and the early crops almost wholly perished in Athni, Gokák, and the east of Chikodi; elsewhere they were withering. Cold-weather crops could not be sown, and the loss caused by the very scanty early rains began to deepen into distress. On the 28th of the month 1·28 inches of rain fell in Belgaum and 1·88 inches in Sampgaon and did great good to the early crops. In Gokák and Athni water was failing, and, especially in Gokák, fodder was so scarce that the Collector asked that the usual order against cutting *asan* Briedelia retusa branches should not be enforced. Cattle were being fed on the withered crops and numbers were dying. About the middle of the month local fund relief works were started. Late in October three inches of rain fell in Parasgad, one inch in Belgaum, and showers in some Gokák and Chikodi villages. In a few places cold-weather crops were sown. The condition of the early crops was generally unfavourable. They had almost entirely failed in Athni and Gokák, nearly three-fourths had gone in Chikodi and Parasgad, and, in the rest of the district they were withering. In the beginning of the month grain was scarce in the Belgaum markets. Later large quantities were imported by sea, but, as most of the imported grain passed through Belgaum to Dhárwár, Kolhápur, and the Patvardhan states, the local supply was only slightly improved. Water and

[1] Walton's Cotton, 58, 65.

[2] The estimate was in area 2660 square miles of a total of 4600, and in population 500,000 out of 940,000.

fodder were growing scarce, and, in the north, people were moving about in search of work, and were sending their cattle to the Sahyádri hills. The scarcity of food and the want of water caused an increase of crime, and for a time the unsafe state of the roads interfered with the import of grain. Local fund relief works gave employment to large numbers, but more works were wanted. November passed without rain and most of the early harvest perished. Except on river banks few cold-weather crops were sown, and where they had been sown they were withering from want of moisture. In Gokák and Athni there was great distress. People were moving to Dhárwár and Maisur, and cattle were dying in great numbers from want of fodder and water. Grain kept pouring in freely from Vengurla for export to Kaládgi, Bágalkot, and other inland towns. The Belgaum market was plentifully supplied, but in Gokák and Athni, owing to the stoppage of exports from Mudhol and Jamkhandi, traders found it so difficult to get supplies that grain had to be sent to the Parasgad relief works. In the beginning of the month, *jvári* rose as high as twelve pounds the rupee, but quickly fell to sixteen pounds. Public works were started. Of 9573, the average daily number relieved during the month, 8839 were able-bodied expected to do a full day's work and superintended by ordinary public works officers, and 734 were aged or feeble expected to do two-thirds of a day's work and superintended by assistant collectors, mámlatdárs, and special officers.[1] December passed without rain and with no change in crop prospects. Grain continued to be largely imported and *jvári* fell from seventeen pounds at the beginning of the month to twenty pounds near the close. About the middle of the month cholera broke out. During the month the numbers of the destitute rose on public works from 8839 to 11,471, and on civil works from 734 to 7749.

1877.

In January no rain fell. Grain importations continued, and the supply was plentiful, except in Athni, where prices slightly rose. *Jvári*, after rising in the beginning to nineteen pounds, fell about the close of the month to twenty pounds the rupee. Cholera continued prevalent. On the 19th of the month the pay of weakly workers was reduced.[2] The result of this change was a fall in the number of civil agency workers from 10,088 in the beginning of the month to 6966 at its close. At the same time, by enforcing distance and task tests, the numbers on public works fell from 18,133 to 8909. During the month 388 persons were charitably relieved. Late in February eight cents of rain fell. Grain supplies continued sufficient, and *jvári* remained steady at nineteen pounds the rupee. In Athni and Gokák water was very scarce. Cholera continued prevalent and the mortality was high. The numbers on relief fell, on public works from 19,106

[1] The original wages were, for a man 3*d.* (2 *as.*) a day, for a woman 2½*d.* (1½ *as.*), and for a boy or girl 1½*d.* (1 *anna*). About the middle of November a sliding scale was introduced, providing that when prices rose over sixteen pounds the rupee, the money rate should vary with the price of grain, and that a man should always receive the price of one pound of grain in addition to one *anna*.

[2] The new rates were, for a man, the price of one pound of grain and ¾*d.* (½ *anna*) instead of 1½*d.* (1 *anna*); for a woman, the price of one pound and §*d.* (¼ *anna*) instead of ¾*d.* (½ *anna*); and for a boy or girl, the price of half a pound of grain and §*d.* (¼ *anna*).

Chapter IV. Agriculture. Famines. 1877.

to 13,235, and on civil works from 7910 to 4507; on charitable relief they rose from 388 to 451. March passed without rain. There was a general, and, in some places, a very great scarcity of water. Grain continued to pour into the district and *jvári* remained steady at eighteen pounds the rupee. The mortality from cholera was very heavy. Against a fall on civil works from 4507 to 4113, the numbers on public works rose from 13,235 to 19,659, and on charitable relief from 451 to 1000. About the middle of April rain began to fall and before the end of the month had averaged 1·20 inches. In Athni grain was scarce; elsewhere, though dear, the supply was sufficient; *jvári* rose from eighteen pounds at the beginning of the month to fifteen pounds about the close. In Athni the scarcity of water was very severe. The cholera mortality was heavy but was decreasing. The numbers on relief rose, on public works from 19,659 to 25,670, on civil works from 4113 to 5615, and on charitable relief from 1000 to 2974. In May good rain fell in Athni, Belgaum, Sampgaon, and Parasgad, and showers in other parts. The sowing of quick-growing crops and rice made considerable progress. In a few places the ordinary early crops were sown, but more rain was required before sowing could be general. Grain supplies continued sufficient, and *jvári* remained steady at fifteen pounds the rupee. Cholera was still prevalent. The numbers on public works rose from 25,670 to 40,389, and on charitable relief from 2974 to 7631. On civil works the numbers fell from 5615 to 2807. In June there was an average fall of 10·89 inches of rain. Rice-sowing was nearly completed, and the sowing of the other early crops was progressing. Over the whole district people were coming back and setting to work on their fields. Grain importations ceased, but the supply was sufficient. *Jvári* rose from fourteen pounds in the beginning of the month to twelve pounds about the close. Cholera continued prevalent but was on the decline. Partly from the good prospects, partly because the distance test was more strictly enforced, the numbers receiving relief fell on public works from 40,389 to 26,818, and on civil works from 2807 to 1638; on charitable relief there was a rise from 7631 to 7972. July passed with very little rain, an average of only 1·61 inches. The break in the monsoon caused much anxiety. Except in Sampgaon the early crops were withering. In Parasgad and Khánápur grain was scarce, and *jvári* rose from eleven pounds in the beginning of the month to 8½ pounds near the close. By the end of the month cholera had almost disappeared. The numbers on relief fell, on public works from 26,818 to 22,294, on civil works from 1638 to 287, and on charitable relief from 7972 to 5486.

In August there was an average fall of 4·80 inches of rain. The fall was chiefly in the west, where the crops considerably improved. In the east there were only a few showers, and in some villages the fields were withering. About the end of the month good rain fell, and such crops as were not past recovery were much benefited. The supply of grain continued sufficient and *jvári* fell from 9½ pounds in the beginning of the month to ten pounds about the close. Cholera, of a mild form, continued prevalent. The numbers on public works rose from 22,294 to 24,995, and on charitable relief

from 5486 to 8898. On the 4th of the month all civil agency works were stopped.[1] In September there was an average fall of 15·44 inches. Except in a few places in the east where the rain came too late to save the crops, by the end of the month, over almost all the district, the prospects of the early harvest were good and the sowing of the cold-weather crops was begun. Grain continued abundant and *jvári* fell from 10½ to eighteen pounds the rupee. There was a marked improvement in the state of the people. Cholera altogether disappeared, and against a rise on charitable relief from 8898 to 13,807, the numbers on public works fell from 24,995 to 21,319. In October rain fell so heavily, 8·98 inches, as, in some places, to harm the ripening crops. *Jvári* rose in the beginning of the month to 15½ pounds but before its close had again fallen to 16½ pounds the rupee. The numbers on public works fell from 21,319 to 9662, and on charitable relief from 13,807 to 9234. In November the weather continued favourable. Except in a few places the sowing of the late crops was over and the harvesting of the early crops was vigorously pushed on. The rupee price of *jvári* fell from nineteen to thirty-one pounds. The numbers on public works fell from 4699 in the beginning of the month to 112 on the 24th when all works were closed; on charitable relief they fell from 9234 to 1260. In December there were a few showers at Belgaum and Khánápur. The late sowing was completed, and the harvesting of the early crops was nearly over. By the end of November all relief-houses were closed.

The following statement of prices and numbers relieved shows that, during the first two months of 1877, grain prices ruled at nineteen pounds the rupee or more than twice the ordinary rates, that its price rose steadily till in July and August it averaged something less than ten pounds, and that between August and November it fell to twenty-seven pounds. As early as December 1876 the numbers on relief works reached 19,220. By lowering wages and enforcing task and distance tests the total was in February reduced to 17,742. From this it advanced till, in May, it stood at 43,196, when it again fell. The decrease was slow in July, August, and September, and more rapid in October and November, when the works were closed. The numbers on charitable relief rose steadily from 388 in January to 7972 in June. They then fell to 5486 in August, and, after rising to 13,807 in September, fell in November to 1260, when almost all charitable relief ceased:

[1] Though civil works were stopped, payment at civil agency rates was continued at the public works to labourers, who, under Government orders, were not entitled to the full wages.

Chapter IV. Agriculture. Famines. *1876-77.*

Belgaum Famine, 1876-77.

Month.	Average Daily Number Relieved-				Jva'ri, Pounds the Rupee.	Rainfall.
	On Works.			Free.		
	Civil.	Public.	Total.			
1876.						
November	734	8839	9573	...	14½	·11
December	7749	11,471	19,220	...	18½	...
1877.						
January	7910	19,106	27,016	388	19	...
February	4507	13,235	17,742	451	19	·8
March	4113	19,659	23,772	1000	18½	...
April	5615	25,670	31,285	2974	16½	1·20
May	2307	40,389	43,196	7631	15½	2·3
June	1638	26,818	28,456	7972	12½	10·89
July	287	22,294	23,581	5486	9½	1·61
August	128	24,995	25,123	8898	9½	4·80
September	...	21,319	21,319	13,807	13½	15·44
October	...	9662	9662	9234	16	8·98
November	...	1526	1526	1260	27	0·5
December	...	...	...	56	34	0·79
Total ..	35,488	244,983	280,471	59,157	...	47·43
Average ...	3548	18,845	21,575	4929	...	...
Cost in Rs. ...	...	...	9,98,648	1,55,314	...	...
			1,153,962			

Relief Houses.

Twenty relief-houses or camps were opened in the district. Of these the camps at Chikodi, Hukeri, Kubbur, Eksambe, Saundatti, Yergatti, Herekop, Gokák, Athni, Kokatnur, Shedbal, and Telsang were opened in the month of November 1876; those at Nándgaon and Páchhápur in the following December; those at Sampgaon and Deshnur in January 1877; those at Yádvád in March, and at Pamaldini in April 1877; and those at Belgaum and Mudalgi in May 1877. The relief-houses at Páchhápur and Eksambe were closed in January 1877, those at Kabbur and Mudalgi in July, at Deshnur in August, at Belgaum and Nándgaon in October, and the rest in November. At Belgaum a rest-house was for long used as a relief-house. Afterwards in the rainy season a shed was built about a mile from the town. In other places no relief houses were built, usually some rest-house or other large building was turned to account. The total number of men women and children fed at the relief-houses was 2,071,838, giving an average of 103,592 for every relief-house, or a monthly average of 172,653 for the whole. Some of the upper and middle classes, weavers and dyers, thought it a disgrace to go on the relief works or to the relief-houses. To help these people Government placed £150 (Rs. 1500) at the disposal of the Collector. From this sum raw materials were bought and advanced to the people, who, on the receipt of the manufactured articles, were paid their market value minus the amount of advance they had received in the shape of raw materials. In this way many families of weavers and dyers in Gokák, Chikodi, and Athni were relieved.

Relief Staff.

In November 1876 the permanent mámlatdárs of Sampgaon, Parasgad, Gokák, and Athni were relieved of their usual duties and deputed to superintend relief works, to inspect crops, and inquire into the condition of the people. In May 1877, when the number

Famines. *1876-77.* *Relief Staff.*

of immigrants passing through Belgaum and the number of the relief works were increasing, it was found necessary to appoint a relief mámlatdár for the Belgaum sub-division also. Mr. T. H. Stewart, C.S., was relieved of his ordinary duties as an assistant collector from December 1876 till the end of the famine, and was deputed for famine duty. Captain G. Coussmaker remained on special famine duty from the 8th of May to the 25th of November 1877. Mr. A. Dalzell, of the survey department, was also appointed temporarily to famine duty from the 23rd of September to the 2nd of December 1877. Captain Coussmaker was detached for duty in Chikodi and Athni and Mr. Dalzell for duty in Gokák. In addition to these officers, from February 1877 to the end of the famine, two sub-overseers on £5 (Rs. 50) a month were appointed to superintend the civil agency relief works. The mahálkari of Chándgad was also appointed on famine duty to help the relief mámlatdár at Gokák as the distress in that sub-division was specially severe. Besides the above staff of officers fifty-two circle inspectors were appointed, ten for Athni, twelve for Gokák, eighteen for Chikodi, and twelve for Parasgad. A group of villages was placed under each of these inspectors. Each village in the inspector's beat was to be visited by him at least twice a week to see that the village officers did their relief duty properly.

Grain.

In October and November 1876 the certainty of a failure of crops induced the holders of grain to hoard their stocks. So closely were the stocks held that in some places grain was most difficult to get. The local stocks were not very large and the holders were chiefly husbandmen and a few local dealers. The people who believed that there were immense stores of grain became discontented and committed many acts of violence and robbery. Very inferior grain was brought to market and sold at very high prices. The better sorts of grain were kept back until the scarcity increased. At this stage of the famine, when no grain was to be had, the Belgaum municipality brought from Vengurla £200 (Rs. 2000) worth of grain which they retailed at cost price to the poorer classes. Municipal sales of grain lasted only about two weeks. Then a few Belgaum, Nipáni, and Gokák merchants began to import grain from Nágpur, Sind, and parts of the Bengal Presidency, either direct or through Bombay agents. Many dealers also bought grain from Bombay merchants. The only Government help offered to grain merchants was by issuing money-orders at par on its being shown that the order was to pay for grain. To the grain-dealers of other districts every facility was offered for importing by stopping the levy of octroi duties on grain. Special police arrangements were made to protect the main roads and on several roads grass was stored. With these encouragements large quantities of grain poured in. Bohorás and cloth-merchants, whose own trade was at a stand, joined in the import. The grain was brought by sea through Vengurla to Belgaum, Gokák, Saundatti, and Khánápur, and through Chiplun and Rájápur to Nipáni, Chikodi, and Athni. It was also brought in smaller quantities from Kárwár by the Kodra and Unshi passes to Belgaum, and was sent from Belgaum to the interior. Every effort was made to help the passage of grain

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towards Bijápur where the distress was severer and grain dearer than in Belgaum.

Famines. 1876-77. Cart-rates.

Before November 1876 the ordinary monthly rate of cart-hire was £2 18*s.* (Rs. 29). During the fourteen months ending December 1877 the monthly cart-rate rose from £2 10*s.* (Rs. 25) in February 1877 to £4 (Rs. 40) in July 1877, and from that fell to £2 16*s.* (Rs. 28) in November and December.[1] About the middle of the famine and before grass stores were opened so many cattle died from overwork and want of food that labourers had to be employed in dragging the grain-carts from Vengurla.

Emigration.

Of the number of people who left the district during the famine no accurate estimate can be formed. It is known that from the west a considerable number of labourers and poor husbandmen went to Kánara, Goa, Kolhápur, and other places in search of work and food, and that from the east numbers went to Haidarabad and Bijápur. Compared with 1872 the 1881 census shows a fall of 80,900 in population. The addition of the normal yearly increase of one per cent during the remaining seven years gives 147,000 as the loss of population caused by death and migration in 1876 and 1877.

Famine Census.

On the 19th of May 1877, when famine pressure was general and severe, a numbering of relief workers showed that of 44,757 labourers, 41,447 on public and 3280 on civil works, 28,447 belonged to the sub-divisions where the works were carried on; 10,218 belonged to different sub-divisions of the same district; 1721 were from other districts; and 4371 from neighbouring states. As regards their occupation, 1309 were manufacturers or craftsmen, 19,731 were holders or sub-holders of land, and 23,717 were labourers.

Cost.

The total cost of the famine is returned at £115,396 (Rs. 11,53,960), of which about £99,865 (Rs. 9,98,650) were spent on public and civil works and £15,531 (Rs. 1,55,310) on charitable relief. Of the whole amount £106,126 (Rs. 10,61,260) were paid from Imperial and £9270 (Rs. 92,700) from local funds.

Effects.

Compared with those of the previous year, the crime returns of 1877 showed an increase of 1209 offences, almost all of which were due to the pressure of want on the lower classes. Of the 1209 offences, 848 were thefts, 293 cattle thefts, nineteen cases of mischief, fourteen criminal breaches of trust, eleven culpable homicides, twelve dacoities, seven house-trespasses, three robberies, and two grievous hurts. The loss of farm stock during the famine to some extent interfered with the carrying of grain and in a marked degree hampered field work. Many landholders who had lost their cattle had to give up their land and a large amount of revenue remained outstanding. The yearly village returns show a fall in the number of cattle from 432,634 in July 1876 to 320,267 in July 1878, a loss of 112,367 head.

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[1] The details are: November and December 1876 £2 14*s.* (Rs. 27), January 1877 £3 12*s.* (Rs. 36), February £2 10*s.* (Rs. 25), March and April £2 18*s.* (Rs. 29), May £3 4*s.* (Rs. 32), June £3 12*s.* (Rs. 36), July £4 (Rs. 40), August £3 6*s.* (Rs. 33), September and October £3 2*s.* (Rs. 31), November and December £2 16*s.* (Rs. 28).

This loss was not so serious as the numbers suggest. The majority of the animals which perished were maimed or diseased bullocks or cows which had ceased to give milk. Still the working and rent-paying power of the district was a good deal affected. The tillage area fell from 946,203 acres in 1875-76 to 651,325 in 1876-77, in 1877-78 it rose again to 868,632 acres, and in 1878-79 to 838,020 acres. In 1876-77 the revenue for collection was £126,473 (Rs. 12,64,730) of which £114,178 (Rs. 11,41,780) were collected in the year. In 1877-78 the amount for collection was £126,679 (Rs. 12,66,970), of which £122,978 (Rs. 12,29,780) were collected in the year. Of the balance of £15,996 (Rs. 1,59,960) £13,632 (Rs. 1,36,320) were collected in subsequent years and £2163 (Rs. 21,630) were remitted.

Rat Plague.

In October 1878, rats, of which there are no less than ten local varieties, swarmed in the northern and eastern sub-divisions of Gokák, Athni, and Parasgad, and in a less degree in Chikodi. Of the ten varieties of which some details are given in the Production Chapter the most destructive to crops was the large-eared field-rat, Golunda mettada. In June and July 1879, though not in such swarms as in some of the Deccan districts, rats were again found in great numbers in the north and east of the district. They did much damage by scratching out and eating the seed grain. Some fields had to be thrice sown. In July 1879, Government offered a reward of 2*s.* (Re. 1) for every hundred rats killed, and the district officers were urged to rouse all classes to bestir themselves to help in ridding the country of the plague of rats. The bulk of the husbandmen from their dislike to take life were of little service. Low-caste Hindus and Musalmáns, though willing to help, were too ignorant of the habits of the rats to be of much service. The Vadars proved excellent rat-catchers digging the burrows and killing the rats in large numbers. Between August and October about 135,000 rats were destroyed and £135 (Rs. 1,350) spent in rewards. Before a reward was paid the rats had to be produced at a Government treasury, where the tails were cut off. The reward was paid to the rat-catcher and the tail-less bodies were returned to him to be eaten. Rewards were continued till the 15th of October 1879. Though the employment of rat-catchers to destroy the rats probably saved the crops from considerable loss, the disappearance of the rats was not solely or even chiefly due to the skill of the Vadars. Towards the end of the year large numbers of rats were killed by very heavy rain and afterwards by cold. The bodies of many rats were also covered with a red tick which was believed to have been the cause of death. By the end of December 1879 the rats had disappeared.